

REMARKS

These remarks are responsive to the Final Office Action dated November 17, 2004. Currently, claims 1-40 are pending with claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33 being independent. This response was necessitated by the Examiner's continued rejection of the claims based on the cited art believed to be overcome by the response to the April 6, 2004 Office Action.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 8-11, 16-19, 24-27, 32-35 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 6,252,850 to Lauret ("Lauret").

The Examiner rejected claims 6, 7, 14, 15, 22, 23, 30, 31, 38 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lauret in view of U.S. patent No. 6,219,396 to Owada ("Owada").

The Examiner rejected claims 4, 12, 20, 28 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lauret in view of U.S. Patent No 6,047,002 to Hartmann et al. ("Hartmann").

The Examiner objected to claims 5, 13, 21, 29 and 37 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims.

For the reasons stated in applicant's August 6, 2004 response, applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejections of the claims. The present claims clearly distinguish the invention over the cited prior art. However, in order to bring the application into earlier allowance and to comply with the requirements of form suggested by the Examiner with regard to claims 5, 13, 21, 29 and 37, independent claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33 have been amended to incorporate the limitations set forth in claims 5, 13, 21, 29 and 37 respectively. Hence the amended claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33 are allowable over the cited art. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections of claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33.

Claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33 were amended instead of claims 5, 13, 21, 29 and 37 to

eliminate the need to amend the claims which depend there from. The amendments in no way reflect applicant's acquiescence to the idea that claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33 were not novel over the cited art.

Claims 5, 13, 21, 29 and 37 have been canceled.

Claims 4 and 6-8; 12 and 14-16; 20 and 22-24; 28 and 30-32; and 36 and 38-40 have been further amended to delete the duplicative limitations now present in the amended claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33.

Claims 2-4 and 6-8; 10-12 and 14-16; 18-20 and 22-24; 26-28 and 30-32; and 34-36 and 38-40 depend on independent claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33 respectively. Thus claims 2-4 and 6-8; 10-12 and 14-16; 18-20 and 22-24; 26-28 and 30-32; and 34-36 and 38-40 are not anticipated by the prior art for at least the same reasons as claims 1, 9, 17, 25 and 33. The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw his rejection of claims 2-4 and 6-8; 10-12 and 14-16; 18-20 and 22-24; 26-28 and 30-32; and 34-36 and 38-40.

Other Matter

No new matter has been added.

The claims currently presented are proper and definite. Allowance is accordingly in order and respectfully requested. However, should the Examiner deem that further clarification of the record is in order, we invite a telephone call to the Applicants' undersigned attorney to expedite further processing of the application to allowance.

Date: February 17, 2005

Respectfully submitted,



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